



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **KC WOMAN SENTENCED FOR THEFT OF PUBLIC MONEY**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Kansas City woman was sentenced in federal court today for illegally spending more than \$9,000 from retirement benefits deposited into the bank account of her deceased grandmother.

**Donna M. Pierson**, 59, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced by U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert E. Larsen this afternoon to three years of probation. The court also ordered her to pay \$9,018.58 in restitution.

On April 8, 2003, **Pierson** pleaded guilty to a federal information charging her with the theft of public money. **Pierson** admitted that she embezzled retirement benefits paid to her deceased grandmother by the Railroad Retirement Board. Although the information charges **Pierson** with the theft of \$913.78, representing a single month's retirement payment, **Pierson's** plea agreement acknowledges that the total amount of improper benefits was \$13,543.94.

Graves explained that **Pierson's** grandmother died on June 3, 2000, at which time her railroad retirement benefits should have been terminated. **Pierson** failed to notify the Railroad Retirement Board of her grandmother's death, so that retirement benefits continued to be direct deposited into a checking account. **Pierson**, using her power of attorney, wrote checks on that bank account from June 2000 through August 2001, Graves said. **Pierson** admitted that she tried to disguise her fraudulent theft of the retirement benefits by back-dating the checks to June or July 2000.

When the bank learned of the theft, Graves said, it closed the account and removed the balance of \$4,525.36. As a result of **Pierson's** theft, the bank suffered a loss of \$9,018.58.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Frances Reddis. The case was

investigated by the Railroad Retirement Board, Office of Inspector General.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

[www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow)